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SUBJECT: GEORGIA-RUSSIA CRISIS; U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

In Transition

Editorial in liberal Folha de S. Paulo (08/28) says: "The crisis in Georgia exposes limits of the Western reaction (to the crisis) and shows a need in adapting diplomacy to a new reality. ... Russia affirms to the world that the attempt in promoting Georgia's territorial reintegration might detonate a conflict between the two major nuclear superpowers.... Russian President Dimitri Medvedev bets on a cold calculus between the Western superpowers: support to Georgia does not compensate for all the risks associated with a confrontational dispute with Russia. And it is not only a matter of military argument... The Americans themselves have no interest in breaking bridges with the Kremlin, it is important to deal with sensitive issues for Washington, such as Iran's ascension.... By coincidence, this transition in the rules of the international game finds the U.S. in the middle of a presidential campaign. If the U.S. is aware of this new reality, both John McCain and Barack Obama will understand that they will need to turn the page of the foreign policy conducted during eight years by George W. Bush."

The Russian Climb In the Caucasus's

Editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (08/28) comments: "Aware of the foreseeable protests against the decision of recognizing unilaterally the independence of Georgian separatist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia...the U.S. and European Union try to persuade Moscow that the tensions incited against the West are against their best interests...Russia's disproportionate reaction to Saakashvilli's adventure...might lead Russia into isolationism, bringing political and economic damage, whose importance should not be underestimated by their leaders... The fact is the European Union is reluctant to go further than words before Russian aggressiveness."

Obama tries to captivate the center to beat McCain

Editorial in business daily Valor Economico (08/28) says: "...In the last months, Obama showed himself to a good part of the electorate as an inexperienced, hesitating politician, who defends an ambiguous program with vague ideas but brilliant rhetoric. After Hilary gave up, Obama did what every politician would do, no matter how he clamored for change -he moved to the center. Part of this is pure political calculus and defensive action. ... However, there is a price to be paid, which is the disappointment to part of this electorate, who believed that the renewing campaign of Obama would be maintained until the end... By Obama winning the battle to be the Democratic candidate and dragging millions of voters to previously apathetic primaries shows that important transformations are under way in the country. We need to see if they are strong enough to overcome prejudices and the conservatism of a great part of the electorate."

White